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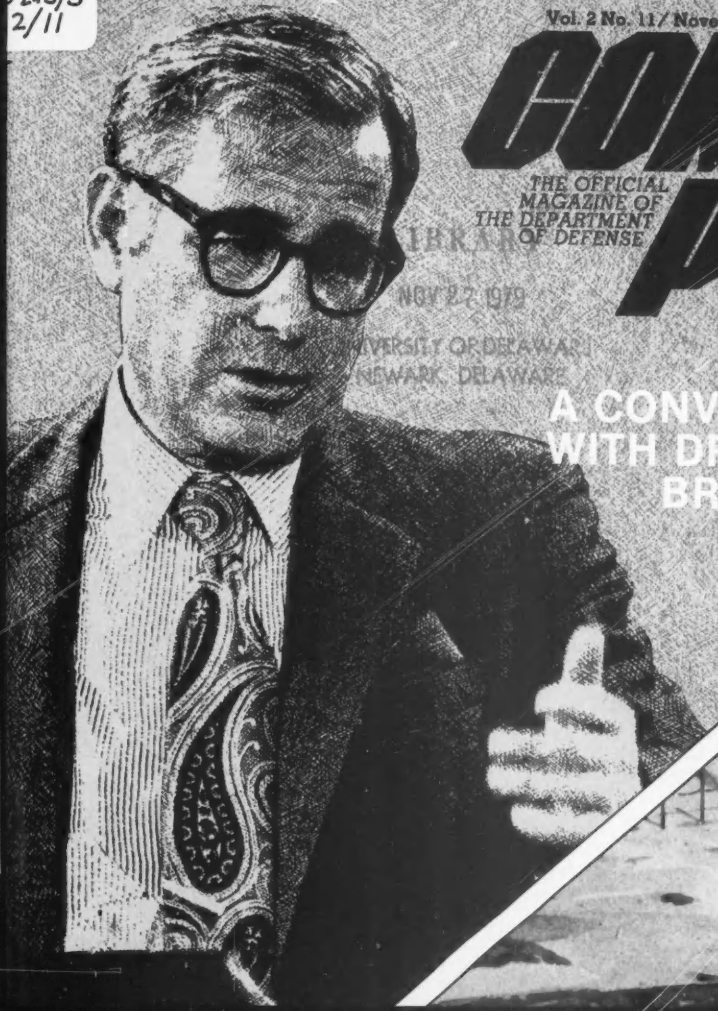

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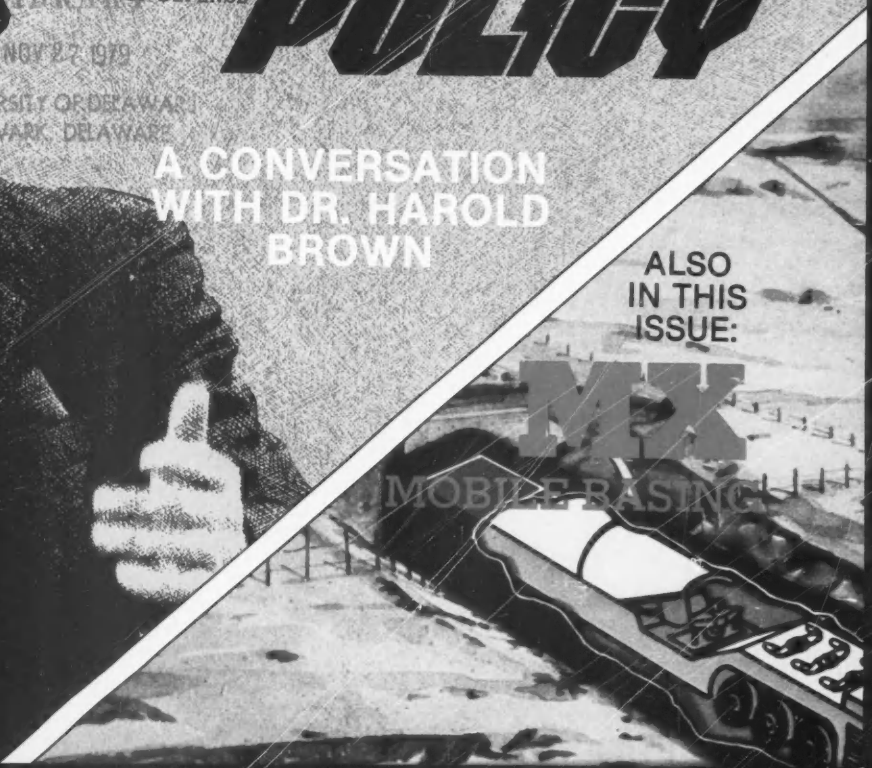


A CONVERSATION WITH DR. HAROLD BROWN

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM A RADIO INTERVIEW
BY MR. MORTON M. KONDRACKE
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, NEW
REPUBLIC MAGAZINE

Following is the text of a broadcast interview with Dr. Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense, conducted by Mr. Morton M. Kondracke, Executive Editor,* NEW REPUBLIC Magazine, *and aired on National Public Radio stations August 24, 1979.

Q: Mr. Secretary, as soon as Congress gets back, you again have the issue of SALT ahead of you and I wonder if you can tell us how it now looks for Senate ratification of the Treaty.

A: I believe, Mr. Kondracke, that we in the Administration have made a persuasive case that the SALT II Treaty puts some inhibitions on the Soviet momentum in their strategic buildup which is a procedure—that is, the inhibitions are a procedure helpful to the United States. The SALT II Treaty allows the United States to do what we need to do to assure that the strategic balance does not tilt against us. SALT II, of course, does not assure that we will do that, and indeed, the debate has in consequence turned to the issue of U.S. defense programs in both strategic and general purpose and to the balance, in military terms, between the United States and the Soviet Union. I think that will now determine in large measure how the Senate finally votes on SALT II.

I think we've made the case that in terms of the agreement itself, that is, in terms of the SALT II Treaty itself, it is equitable, it is verifiable, and it does provide a reasonable basis for more far reaching arms limitations and reductions in subsequent negotiations. I don't think we've been successfully challenged on that. The issues that have been raised are the issues of military balance, military programs and the question of whether a SALT II Treaty approval by the Senate would tranquilize the United States into not doing what it needs to do and what SALT II allows it to do for our own security.

Q: Senator Nunn and Senators Tower and Jackson have come up with a proposal that we have a five percent real growth increase in the Defense budget and that seems to be their price for SALT ratification for their votes, especially in Senator Nunn's case. Do you think that that is the amount of money that the Administration is going to have to come up with in order to get passage?

A: I don't think that it is a matter solely of Defense funding, Mr. Kondracke, and I think that different members of the Senate would undoubtedly have different views of what is the proper Defense level. Two facts should be considered in any examination of this question. One fact is that the Soviet Union has for more than fifteen years, almost twenty years now, been increasing its defense spending in real terms by three or four percent annually, while the United States has in real terms a defense budget smaller this year—will spend less for defense this year than we did in 1963, before the

Vietnam buildup began. There's no way, given anything like comparable efficiencies on the two sides, that that sort of history can have taken place without a trend in the direction of Soviet increased capability militarily relative to the United States and indeed that has taken place. We're in a roughly equivalent position now but if such a trend goes on for many more years—five years, certainly in ten years, the Soviet Union will by almost anybody's measure be substantially ahead militarily. We have to do something about that whether there's a SALT II Treaty or not. The SALT II Treaty makes it somewhat easier for us to do it and enables us to do it at a smaller increase in expenditures than would otherwise be necessary to assure the strategic balance. That's one point.

The second point is that the Congress in past years has reduced the funds requested by the President. Over the past ten years, I guess, it's reduced it by about $50 billion. Well, that $50 billion would have made a considerable difference in our military capability and in our military readiness. Congress hasn't completed action yet on the Fiscal Year 1980 Defense appropriations, but some bodies of the Congress, in budget committees and in the appropriations committees that are just beginning their work, have again proposed substantial reductions in the President's Fiscal Year 1980 budget. Now I know that Congress, to put it mildly, does not speak with one voice, but it is very difficult for us to satisfy a Congress which says that we should be spending more than we plan to on defense and at the same time satisfy a Congress that says that our proposals are too large.

Those are the two facts I wanted to set out. Then I wanted to make the observation that although the level of spending is certainly the easiest shorthand way to say what you're doing for defense, it matters a good deal what you spend it for. Money can be spent more or less efficiently and more or less effectively. We believe that what we proposed and what we have committed ourselves to our Allies to do, that is a three percent annual real increase after inflation over each of several years, does provide enough scope for us to maintain an adequate balance with the Soviets. Now, we believe that we will actually spend three percent more in real terms in Fiscal '79 than we did in Fiscal '78. In Fiscal '80, our budget estimate sent up in January contained an under-estimate of the actual inflation, and so to that extent, we're responsible for a shortfall—we in the Executive Branch. The Congress, if it cuts, will be responsible for an additional shortfall.

I think we should continue to live up to our commitments to our NATO Allies. And we're now considering what course of action is the best way to do that. But I think that we have to do more than just reach a certain fixed percentage real increase, whether it's three percent or four percent or whatever. We have said three percent is a commitment we have made. But, what you spend it on is equally important and we will be prepared to make clear, actually we already have but I think we need to explain it better, just what additional forces—conventional, strategic—and what additional capabilities in terms of readiness, our ability to move forces, etc., our proposed defense program will provide.

Q: Also during the SALT hearings, former Secretary Kissinger seemed to blame this Administration more than past Administrations for the growing gap between U.S. and Soviet strategic capability. I wonder what you might have to say in response to his allegation.

A: Well, he is no more prone than the rest of us to self blame, but I think it is true that he said this problem of the military balance did not arise solely during this Administration. In fact, he was questioned about past Administrations and made it clear that if he had some things to do over again he might not do the same things in terms of the defense posture of the country. I think perhaps the best way to describe it is that he became aware of the problem during this Administration.

Q: One of the items that both Senator Nunn and Secretary Kissinger seemed to be firm about is that we deploy the MX missile and I gather that this Administration has reached a decision that it will do so and that the President is about to decide finally on the mode. Is that where it stands?

A: The President has made a decision to go ahead with the development of the missile. He did that some months ago, actually two months ago. At that time, we were sufficiently convinced that we would be able to come up with a deployment mode, a

survivable mobile deployment mode, so that we felt and he concluded that that was an appropriate decision, a decision to produce the missile. The decision on the deployment mode should be made within a very few weeks. The President has not yet made it. We have had a number of meetings on it. The final decision will be made as I indicated quite soon.

Q: The Pentagon is reported to have recommended a land-based mode, a continuation of the land-based deployment of the missile. Some critics say that it would be cheaper and maybe less provocative toward the Soviets and maybe less dangerous for us to put the missile at sea in barges; in cheap submarines close to port, they would be hidden there and they would be less vulnerable to attack than even the land-based mode.

A: There are various ways to deploy missiles. We do deploy survivable sea-based missiles now. Our approach to strategic forces has been to have a mixed force, mixed in the sense of some being missiles, that is, ballistic missiles; some being air-breathing, that is, bombers or cruise missiles. And also being mixed in terms of their basing so that if the Soviets find a way to attack one form of basing they still have to find a different form of attack for the other basing. One advantage of this kind of mixed strategic force is that if one leg of what we call the triad weakens, we have time to fix it before the others become vulnerable.

Now that's what has happened. Our land-based ICBMs will be vulnerable in the early 1980s because of the increase in the number of Soviet warheads and the improvement in their accuracy. So the hardened silos in which our land-based missiles are located will be vulnerable. However, our bombers will preserve their survivability and be able to penetrate, either themselves or with cruise missiles, and our submarine-launched ballistic missiles will, I'm convinced, I'm confident, will be invulnerable through the 1980s.

It's harder to speak with

certainty about the 1990s. If the Soviets were able to concentrate all of their efforts, for example, on an anti-submarine warfare endeavor—some new developments that might, and I won't speculate on what they might be, be able to locate our submarines within even rather substantial distances, they could by barraging those relatively restricted areas where they might be able to locate our submarines and by barraging our bomber bases, be able to destroy both of those. I'm convinced that's not going to happen into the '80s, but if it should happen in the 90s, it would be very helpful to have a survivable land-based system, the destruction of which the Soviets would have to go at in a very different way. Anti-submarine warfare is not a very helpful way of finding out where land-based missiles are.

So, in summary to answer your question, I would say, yes, you can have submarine-launched ballistic missiles. We have them and what we want to do is preserve a diversified force because that is less vulnerable to a single technological advance on the part of the Soviet Union and less vulnerable to a concentration of resources by them on attack on one single strategic force.

Q: There are some critics, principally doves, who are worried about the fact that the MX missile when we get it deployed will give us a first-strike capability against Soviet land-based missiles which represent a larger proportion of the Soviet force than our land-based missiles do and the question is, do we want that kind of capability and is there any possibility that we could induce the Soviets to trade some of their heavy missiles for our MX? In other words, not deploy them at all.

A: We tried to get the Soviets early in 1977 to reduce their land-based force so that it would be less of a threat to our land-based ICBMs. They refused to. And, I think by now it is probably too late even if they wanted to take that path, to go down that route. It always surprises me that some Americans are much more concerned about Soviet force survivability than they seem to have ever been about U.S. force survivability. But I think they raise a legitimate point nevertheless. I just regret that they have never raised that similar concern about U.S. forces.

The fact that the Soviets have a larger fraction of their forces in fixed land-based missiles is their doing. It's not that their other forces are somewhat smaller than ours. It's that that force is somewhat bigger and they've got perhaps two thirds of their force by some measures in land-based ICBMs. If they tripled the size of their land-based ICBM force, instead of being four times as big as ours, it would be twelve times. But I would not feel more concerned about them for that reason, and the line of reasoning that you quote would suggest that I should be. That is, the bigger they get the more I should worry about—the more the United States should worry about threatening what they have.

I think that the thing to remember about this is that if the United States were able to threaten the Soviet land-based ICBM force, the Soviets still have their submarine launched ballistic missiles and so they would be able, in my opinion, to deter us from any unprovoked attack. If our forces threaten their land-based ICBMs, then the appropriate action for them to take is to spend some additional money to make those forces survivable which is what we're doing. If we don't threaten their forces, in fixed silos, then they can spend that money to make bigger and better missiles which threaten us more. And I find that a rather less attractive situation than the one in which they are forced to put more of their strategic strength in other systems like sub-launched ballistic missiles or bombers which are less of a first strike weapon. In other words, given the choice between the Soviets making their forces more survivable or making them more threatening to us, I prefer pushing them into making them more survivable.

Q: A couple of questions about non-strategic systems. First of all, it's entirely possible that the Soviets if they wanted to get us in the most vulnerable place would get us in our oil supplies. Senator Hart and others have said that in order to protect that vital lifeline that we need more Navy spending, less Army spending; basically more smaller ships than the current budgets provide. What do you say about that?

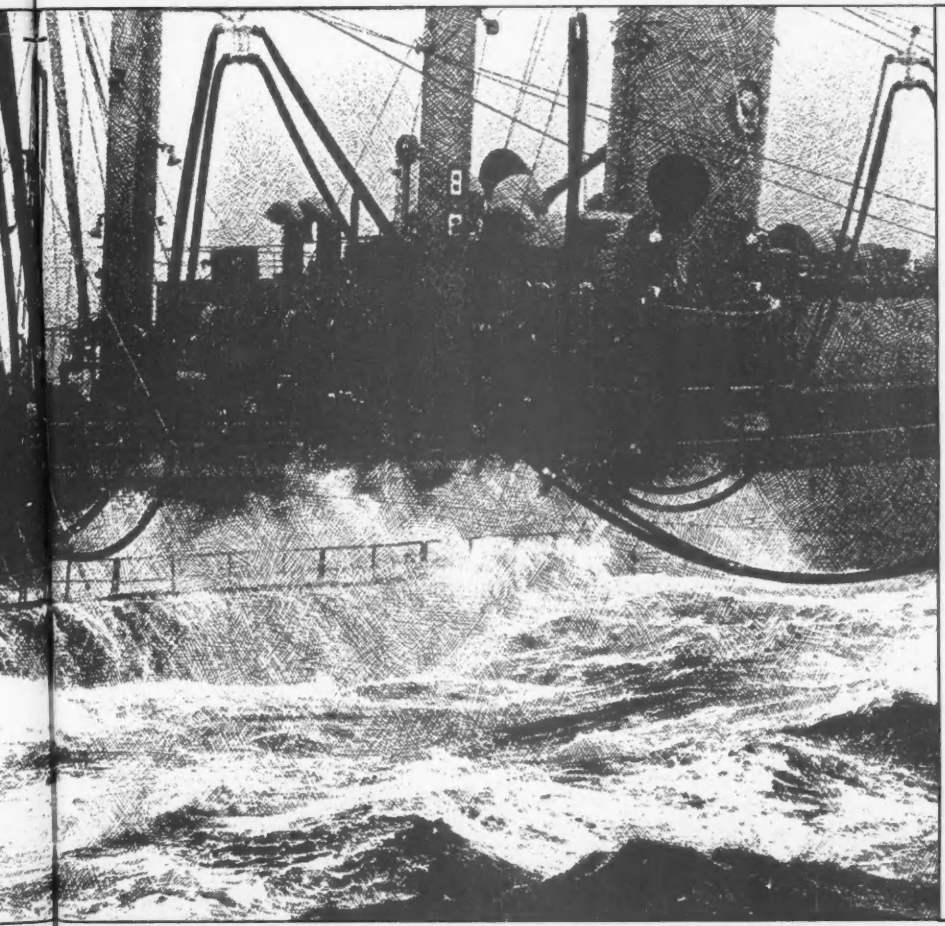
A: Well, there are two issues here. One is, are we spending enough on defense, and there is a variety of views on that; and the second, is the balance right?

I think we cannot afford to deprive our land forces of the strength that they need to bolster the efforts of our

European Allies in maintaining a reasonable balance on land in Europe. If we do that, if we do maintain a reasonable balance, then the oil supplies (partly of the United States, but rather less of the United States, we get a much smaller fraction of our oil from the Middle East than the Europeans do, and of course, still less than the Japanese do) become quite vulnerable under those circumstances. That makes it important for us to maintain global strength.

It is true, I think, that we are far better able to do that in the Indian Ocean and with long range navies than our Allies are. And so it may be that in the future they should pick up a larger fraction of the load of forces of military strength in their own regions while we go more in the direction of global military strength. I don't rule that out but that takes a very carefully arranged agreement on the part of our Allies that they will pick up the difference. If we don't increase our overall military efforts, then I'm sure they won't do that. If we do increase our overall military efforts, I think they may well be prepared to see the preponderence of this increase go into areas like strategic systems or like global naval systems that they are much less likely to develop for themselves.

On the issue of the numbers of ships and costs of individual ships, I would agree that the Alliance as a whole needs to have enough ships to be able to cover lots of different places at the same time. The difficulty is that the threat, particularly the air threat to our surface ships, is increasing and to defend against it takes large and expensive systems. Again, it may be feasible to work out a division of labor here in which the United States provides the bulk of the biggest and most complicated ships, which only we can make. We're the only Alliance member, except for the French actually, who have aircraft carriers and they have only a very small number. I think they have two. We're the only ones that have been able to build the complicated phased array radars that are needed for air defense in a high threat environment. So that I agree with Senator Hart, but I would rephrase it to say that the Alliance as a whole needs quite a few more low cost ships, some of them using new concepts and that which ones we build and which ones our Allies build are something that we're going to have to work out.



Q: One final question. It's been suggested that in order to deter Pakistan from developing nuclear weapons that we increase our conventional military aid to that country. What do you think about that idea?

A: It would certainly ease our relationships with Pakistan and allow us to be more forthcoming in assistance of various kinds if they made a clear commitment not to develop nuclear explosives and followed up on it by their actions. So long as they're not willing to do that, there actually is existing legislation that prevents us from making the kinds of military transfers, extending credit and indeed doing some things in a non-military area that we would otherwise very much like to do. I would be delighted—I know the U.S. Government—the United States would be delighted to see Pakistan make and observe such a commitment.

Q: But there's no indication that it's willing to make that kind of a trade?

A: Well, that is something that Pakistan is going to have to decide for itself. We are not in a position to deter it from doing something. We can try to encourage it not to become a nuclear power and we have been doing that.

MX
MOBILE
BASING

"The basing mode of the MX will reduce that vulnerability to an attack by this Soviet ICBM force. . ."

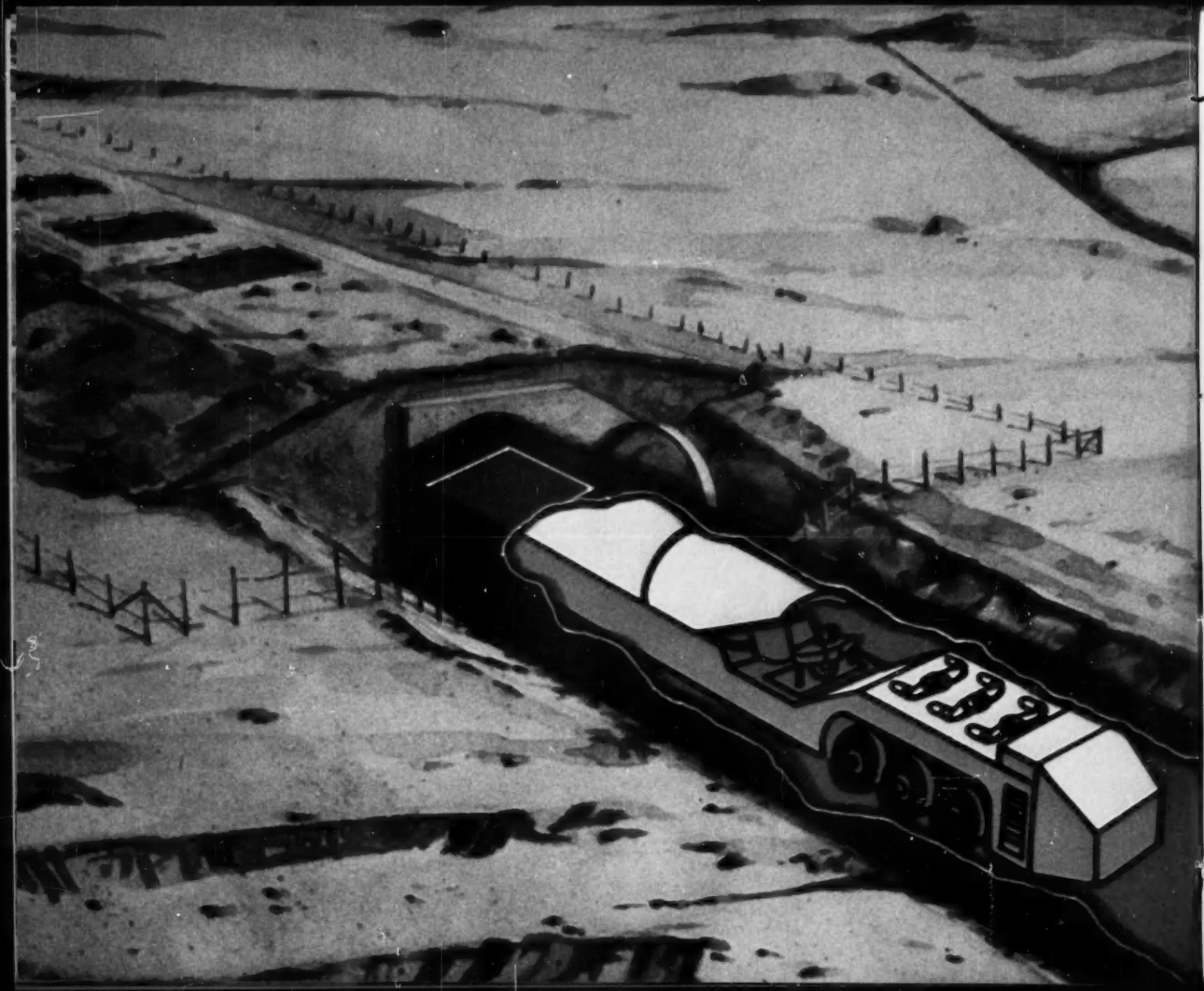
By Dr. William J. Perry
Under Secretary of Defense
for Research and Engineering

In June, the President decided to proceed with full-scale development of the MX missile program. He has now selected a mobile basing mode for its deployment. The missile whose advanced development is already underway, weighs 190,000 pounds, more than twice the size of the Minuteman missile and about equal to the size of the Soviet's SS-19. It will carry 10 high-yield, high-accuracy warheads which will give it military capability equivalent to the SS-18, the Soviet's largest intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). We plan to deploy 200 of these missiles, each mounted on a transporter-erector launcher (TEL). Each TEL would have a deployment area consisting of 23 horizontal shelters interconnected with a loop-road. The TEL will be located in one of the 23 shelters and we will employ security measures to keep from a potential attacker the knowledge of that location. To facilitate verification we will periodically (or on challenge) open the shelters for inspection by satellites. As an additional security feature we would be able to redeploy the missiles from one shelter to any other in a time less than that of ICBM flight.

Since the mid-1960s, our ICBM force has been housed in hardened silos which were resistant to attack. However, the Soviets are improving the number and accuracy of their ICBM warheads so that within a few years they will be able to attack and destroy these silos. The basing mode of the MX will reduce that vulnerability to an attack by this Soviet ICBM force so that such an attack on our ICBMs would result in a relative weakening of Soviet (as compared to U.S.) forces. However, it is important to note that the MX will not achieve its initial operational capability until 1986 (and full operational capability in 1989). The stability of our deterrent force during much of the 1980s will depend primarily on our submarine launched missiles (SLBMs) and on our bomber/cruise missile forces because of the possibility of a crippling surprise attack on our Minuteman force. An attacker could not be certain that the Minuteman force would not be launched before it was destroyed, though we do not want to depend on that uncertainty. Moreover, those bombers and cruise missile carriers on alert will survive an attack and that portion of our SLBM force at sea will be invulnerable to attack during this period. However, we cannot count on the invulnerability of these forces indefinitely, especially if we give the Soviets a chance to concentrate on countering them. From that, and from the particular operational advantages of the ICBM force, flows the importance of restoring the ICBM survivability by the end of the 1980s.

The MX system achieves survivability by forcing the Soviets to target shelters instead of missiles, and by building more shelters than they can realistically attack effectively. We achieve the first objective by denying knowledge of which of the 23 shelters contains the missile. The security measures we have devised will allow the Soviets to know that only *one* shelter has a missile but will not allow them to know *which* one. Even if the Soviets were to locate the missiles and launch an attack, we could move the missile to a different shelter before their ICBMs reached their targets. This rapid dispersal capability is intended primarily to complicate the task of the Soviet war planner (thereby deterring him from attacking) and to give us an insurance policy against a Soviet capability to tell which shelter contains the launcher. As a result of these measures, we can have high confidence that any attacker wanting to destroy the MX missile force would have to target all of the shelters. How many shelters are necessary to deter such an attack would depend on how many RVs the Soviets have and what percentage of them could reasonably be allocated to the mission of destroying ICBMs. Against the projected Soviet threat with SALT II constraints, the 4,600 shelters are adequate. To attack the MX force would require the entire Soviet ICBM force, leaving the Soviet SLBM and bomber forces to face the U.S. SLBM and bomber/cruise missile forces (the latter would be clearly superior to the Soviets'), plus those U.S. ICBMs that survive the attack. In short, the Soviets would be in a worse position after the attack than before, even without considering a U.S. retaliatory strike against residual Soviet forces.

Larger Soviet ICBM forces are possible to envisage. These would require a correspondingly larger MX "force" (more shelters, and perhaps more deployment areas, depending on the nature of the threat) to achieve comparable levels of survivability. We have sized our MX force against the Soviet ICBM force projected for the 1980s assuming SALT constraints. But we have also considered MX force sizes that would be necessary to respond to



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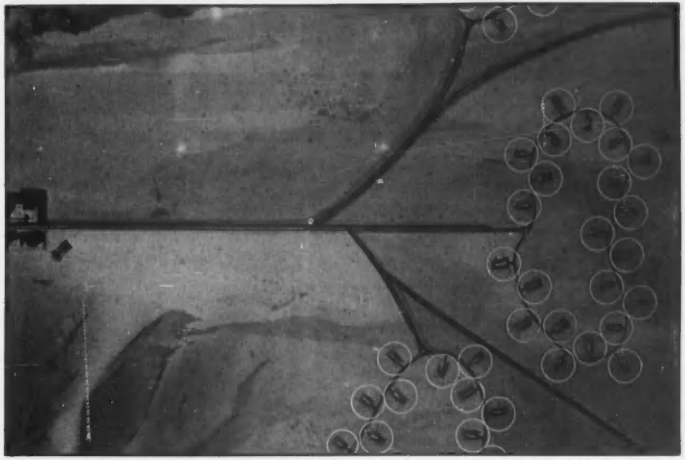

Current plans call for deploying 200 MX missiles, each mounted on a transporter-erector launcher (TEL), shown at left. Each TEL will have a deployment area consisting of 23 horizontal shelters interconnected with a loop road (right). The TEL will be located in one of the 23 shelters, such as the one shown below, and security measures will be employed to keep from a potential attacker the knowledge of the location.

larger Soviet forces that are possible under SALT II, in the absence of SALT II, and if SALT II were to terminate without a SALT III agreement. It is clear that whatever plausible ICBM force the Soviets deploy, we can maintain our deterrence by deploying more shelters (and for a cost comparable with or less than that of the Soviets' ICBM expansion). It is also clear that we can maintain deterrence at lower cost *with* SALT II because it puts a cap on the ICBM RVs we have to face. There is not much we can do to accelerate the final operational capability of the MX. But we could achieve a substantially larger MX deployment than we now plan by almost the same final operational date, since we can build shelters at the rate of 2,000 per year. We could have, for example, a 10,000 shelter system completely deployed by 1989, if we concluded by 1984 that this was necessary.

We don't believe this expansion of the Soviet ICBM force will be attractive to them. The MX missile, like the Soviet ICBMs, will have a countersilo capability. The planned size of the MX deployment (200 missiles) is such that we would not achieve any real advantage by attacking Soviet silos. However, in the case of expanded forces on both sides the larger MX force could devastate the fixed silos in the force and still have residual warheads. The Soviet war planner should draw two conclusions from this: (a) he should not provoke the U.S. into an ICBM race because, with both sides having counterforce missiles, the leverage is with the side that has survivable basing; and (b) he should shift his emphasis from large fixed silo ICBMs to more survivable forces. Such a shift could drive them, for example, to smaller, mobile, ICBMs, a force less threatening to us and less destabilizing.

Another major criterion is verifiability of the system. The MX system deals effectively with that issue, both in fact and in perception. It should be as easy or easier to verify the numbers of such a deployment than is the case for other mobile systems—SLBMs, bombers, and road mobile systems that are not confined to a designated deployment area. Our intelligence analysts have done a careful analysis of verifiability (and as a result have influenced some of our design features). They conclude that the MX system as designed can

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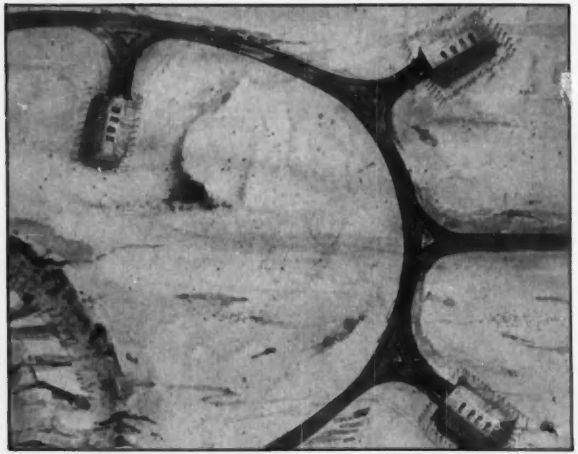
be verified either as a U.S. deployment or as a Soviet deployment.

The Air Force has worked effectively with state and local governments and with the public on the environmental impact of the system. As a result there is good public support in the probable deployment areas. The governors of Nevada and Utah, for example, have both expressed support for the system. We plan a vigorous effort to make MX energy-independent via solar techniques. Such an effort could be of significant national value in maturing that technology so that costs reduce to acceptable levels for other applications.

Acquisition of the MX system is estimated to cost about $33 billion in FY 80 dollars. This includes development, production, and installation. Operating costs will be $440 million per year. These are substantial expenses, but they are comparable with those of other major strategic programs. For example, corresponding costs for the Minuteman program (in FY 80 dollars) are $40 billion, with operating costs running $340 million per year. Alternative MX concepts with adequate survivability would be even more costly (Air Mobile MX and Trench MX, for example), except for the vertical shelter MPS system. That would cost about $27 billion (FY 80 dollars) but would not be as satisfactory a solution either from a verification or a survivability point of view.

The costs have been carefully estimated, but with any complex system projected 10 years into the future, there is bound to be uncertainty. Historically, major DoD projects have averaged 15 percent higher than their originally estimated costs. We have prepared careful and conservative estimates in the first place and will maintain tight management control during the execution phase. The most critical phase in terms of cost control is the first year or two, when requirements tend to balloon and when the contract structure is established. There are some features which probably may ultimately be added to the system (e.g., mass simulators), but which will be deferred until their need is clear. If the Soviets increase their ICBM threat in the absence, or termination, of SALT we would expand the MX system in response and that would, of course, increase the cost. Expanding to 300 missiles and 6,900 shelters, for example, would cost an additional $8 billion. On the other hand, if we can negotiate significant reductions in the Soviet ICBM threat in SALT III, that could allow us to deploy fewer MX missiles than planned, with a corresponding cost reduction.

In sum, the MX system is designed to meet a real and serious threat being posed by the Soviets and it will do so with high confidence. It will be expensive, but not more than previous strategic systems developed for the same purpose—to maintain an unambiguously strong and secure strategic deterrent. It will be compatible with SALT II and in fact can lead to force reductions in SALT III. And it will be minimally intrusive on the environment and the public.



Security measures will allow the Soviets to know that only one shelter in a cluster has a missile but will not allow them to know which one. Even if the Soviets were to locate the missiles and launch an attack, the missile could be moved to a different shelter before the ICBMs reached their targets.

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